

## **TOWN MEETING IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE**

Fiscal Year 2004

Under Article 8 of the 2003 Annual Town Meeting, on April 30th, it was voted: "that the town authorize the Moderator to appoint a Town Meeting Improvements Committee consisting of 9 registered voters, at least 5 of which shall be elected from different precincts of the town, to recommend to the Fall 2003 Town Meeting such additions and/or changes in by-laws and other governing acts, rules and regulations as to improve Town Meeting." On its final day of existence – June 30, 2004 – the Town Meeting Improvements Committee issued the following final report:

The Town Meeting Improvements Committee identified several key goals during our work:

- shorten Town Meeting
- increase accountability
- make membership in Town Meeting possible for a wider range of people
- increase communication between town government and citizens
- increase the education of Town Meeting members about issues, about the operations of Town Meeting, and about town government in general.

Town Meeting has instituted changes that we believe can help meet these goals, including:

1. creation of an elected Coordinating Committee to provide leadership and organization within Town Meeting
2. institution of a "Consent Calendar" to speed handling of Town Meeting articles that are unopposed
3. adoption of the use of green (yes) and red (no) cards in debate and in recorded tally votes
4. endorsement of further study of electronic voting in Town Meeting, a preliminary study of which we have now completed
5. reduction in the number of members required to conduct a tally vote and use of red & green cards during such tally votes
6. creation of a committee to investigate the possibility of creating a small fund to cover childcare (or other family care) costs for members of Town Meeting.

We believe that all of these changes will improve Town Meeting and that the creation of the Coordinating Committee is especially significant. We hope it will continue the educational efforts we began with this year's orientation and warrant review meeting. We believe it can provide leadership, outreach, and a way to seek further improvements in Town Meeting.

We support the moderator's efforts to ensure that debate remains focused and non-repetitive, because the success of Town Meeting ultimately depends on members themselves. Brevity, respect and self-restraint are all necessary to ensure that Town Meeting is effective, representative, and a rewarding experience for those who are elected.

Lyle A. McGeoch, Chair	Irving P. Rothberg, Co-chair	Alan Root, Secretary/Clerk
Frank M. Gatti	Kenneth R. Mosakowski	Jeanne F. Potash
Christopher E. Riddle	Jana L. Sorge	David Yaukey